

Today's News - Thursday, August 4, 2011

- Starting the day on two very sad notes with the loss of two young visionaries.
- On a brighter note, Farrelly had us laughing (and cringing) out loud with her take on the "ridiculous bunfight over the Australian pavilion in Venice" (a must-read!).
- Glinert minces no words about what he thinks of new names for new post-Olympic neighborhoods: "They sound like squares on a Monopoly board devoted to Prince Charles's contrived faux-Georgian village of Poundbury."
- Goldberger is enthralled with NYC's new East River esplanade: it's a must-see "if you want to see the future of public space in New York."
- Cities are getting serious about recasting vacant lots "as community assets rather than urban blight."
- Groves brings us word that Neutra's Kronish House gets a reprieve from the wrecking ball - and Beverly Hills might actually get a historic-preservation ordinance.
- Brechin offers an eloquent ode to the "superb post offices of the New Deal era" as the USPS sells off FDR's legacy to the highest bidders: they're "buildings that once physically embodied government honesty, efficiency and even culture. Perhaps, that is why they must go."
- Brussat revisits H.L. Mencken's 1931 "The New Architecture": his "inclination to dismiss modernism with a smirk and a sneer...erred in assessing the fate, if not the essence, of modernism."
- A new initiative includes a documentary "about the social effects and the place of the bicycle in the modern city."
- The mayor of Vilnius, Lithuania, takes rather drastic measures in his fight against cars illegally parked in bike lanes (very amusing - if it's not your car).
- Brisbane picks a winner in its ferry terminal competition.
- Do fold and spindle: a Canadian company designs an emergency housing system made up of pleated paper partitions.
- U.S. DOE is looking for new digs for Solar Decathlon 2013, inviting venues across the country to compete for the opportunity.
- We couldn't resist: a Stuttgart-based photographer's stunning aerial photos that "put Google Earth to shame."

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Obituary: 1958-2011: Cutting-edge Chicago architect passed away at his home the day before his 53rd birthday....[he] was a lightning rod for young emerging talent. By Stanley Tigerman/Tigerman McCurry Architects [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

Obituary: Sylvia Harris, 1953-2011: David Gibson remembers classmate and colleague: We believed in the notion of good design for the common good. We weren't involved in selling things but rather in helping to create access to the tools and places of public life. -- Two Twelve Associates; Citizen Research and Design/Citizen R&D - The Architect's Newspaper

Champagne, not beer, key to a new Pav: The Venice pavilion may be small..."This is an important building . . ." Too important, it seems, not to screw up. Too important for us not to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory in time-honoured Aussie tradition...This is not about being fair, or kind, or giving young talent a chance...This is about seeking out that high, wild card, about not leaving the nuancing of life to some committee... By Elizabeth Farrelly -- Philip Cox (1988); Sverre Fehn (1962); James Stirling (1991)- Sydney Morning Herald

Today's Olympic Park is tomorrow's ... faux-Georgian hamlet? If Iain Sinclair or Peter Ackroyd had named the post-2012 neighbourhoods, they'd have done better than 'Chobham Manor'...Eastwick, Marshgate Wharf, Sweetwater, Pudding Mill...the names chosen for five new neighbourhoods that will be built on the site of the Olympic Park in Stratford...Was this really the best they could do? By Ed Glinert-Guardian (UK)

On the East River Waterfront Esplanade: If you want to see the future of public space in New York, don't go to the High Line, not because it isn't good—it is spectacularly, wonderfully, gloriously good...Go instead to the East River at the foot of Wall Street...It suggests that a whole new set of ideas is now driving the making of public space... By Paul Goldberger -- Gregg Pasquarelli/SHoP Architects; Ken Smith- New Yorker

Finding the Potential in Vacant Lots: Scientists are studying vacant lots to document their ecological benefits and recast them as community assets rather than urban blight...the question may not be what we can do for our vacant lots but what our vacant lots can do for us...It would be encouraging to believe that urban farms and community gardens could be part of a comprehensive solution. -- Ultra-Ex; Philadelphia Green; Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative [images, links]- New York Times

Richard Neutra's Kronish House gets a reprieve: Bowing to community pressure, the owners...agreed to postpone its demolition until at least Oct. 10 to give preservationists a chance to devise a plan to save the residence. In a related and groundbreaking action, the Beverly Hills City Council...asked the community's Planning Commission to devise a historic-preservation ordinance. By Martha Groves - Los Angeles Times

The fading genius of the US post office: The superb post offices of the New Deal era are a monument to America's democratic ethos. Now we're selling off FDR's legacy...buildings that once physically embodied government honesty, efficiency and even culture. Perhaps, that is why they must go...The New Dealers envisioned a new Renaissance. Its successors are knocking that legacy down to the highest bidder, and with it goes what we once were and might yet be. By Gray Brechin- Guardian (UK)

H.L. Mencken on 'The New Architecture': ...written for the February 1931 issue of The American Mercury...his inclination to dismiss modernism with a smirk and a sneer...erred in assessing the fate, if not the essence, of modernism. He saw it as "making little progress" in America. That certainly was true at the time he wrote, but it accelerated soon thereafter. By David Brussat [images, links]- Providence Journal (Rhode Island)

Bicycles and sustainability in the city: A crowd-funded initiative called *Genre De Vie* has created a documentary about the social effects and the place of the bicycle in the modern city...geographer Vidal de la Blanche introduced the concept of 'genre de vie' (way of life) in the beginning of the 20th century...[video]- Architecture & Design (Australia)

Lithuanian Mayor Goes on Bike Lane Offensive: ...became fed up with cars illegally parked in the city's bike lanes...he ordered in a tank and proceeded to crush a Mercedes-Benz stopped not only in a bike lane but partially in a crosswalk...best of all, the Zukas swept the broken glass from the bike lane and hopped on an electric bike and rode off into the horizon. Can you imagine such a thing happening in America? [video]- The Architect's Newspaper

Brisbane Ferry Terminals winner announced: ..."solution needs to be as simple as possible...without

complication in its response to future floods or potentially cyclones" ...canopied terminals will enhance the experience of the CityCat... -- Cox Rayner architects/Derlot/Aurecon; Second Nature Collaborative (Candalepas Associates/Richards and Spence/Owen and Vokes/Arup); Shane Thompson Architects/LAT27/Bill Short Engineers [images]- Australian Design Review

Paper, Pleated and Clipped for Shelter: Molo, a Canadian company, has created an emergency housing system called Softshelter, made up of pleated paper partitions...No tools are required for assembly, which takes about five minutes. [images]- New York Times

Call for entries: Department of Energy Considers New Venue for Solar Decathlon 2013: DOE is inviting venues across the nation to compete for the opportunity to host this award-winning event; deadline: August 29, 2011- U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)

Stephan Zirwes's Stunning Aerial Photos Put Google Earth To Shame: The Stuttgart-based photog hangs out of helicopters to capture the large-scale patterns and textures of the natural and man-made environment. [images]- Fast Company

Book Review: Talkin' 'Bout (Not) My Generation: Uplifting Gen X Architects Showcase Pragmatic Optimism: In "New York Dozen: Gen X Architects" by architect Michael J. Crosbie, the framing of each architectural firm is extraordinary. By Norman Weinstein- ArchNewsNow

-- David Chipperfield Architects: The Hepworth Wakefield, Wakefield, UK
-- J. Mayer H. architects: Metropol Parasol, Seville, Spain

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